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THE STAR OF THE EAST

قَمَطَا : قَمَطَا

an ecumenical journal dealing
specially with the oriental and
eastern orthodox churches.

JOHN THOMAS, KENINGDITCH,
PANDALM, P.O.

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An Ecumenical Journal dealing specially with
the Oriental and Eastern Orthodox Churches.

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JOHN THOMAS, KARINGATTIL
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Editorial

1. South Africa—Are We at a Turning Point?

The Black young people in South Africa are now on the streets. They are often but not always unarmed. They bare their chests without fear to the bullets of the oppressive white regime. They accuse their own elders of being too patient, too passive, too non-violent in their resistance to a fascist apartheid regime totally lacking in moral sensitivity.

The outside world hardly gets to hear about it. The stifling of the media is temporarily quite efficient. Foreign correspondents and TV cameras are not allowed anywhere in the vicinity of the areas of unrest. The authorities impound the passports of black or white South Africans who are likely to talk about this new spate of violence and repression.

The economy is crumbling. The Rand has fallen to a third of its former value. Shares in corporations operating in South Africa are going for a song. Many South African white companies are putting their money into British and American companies. The white Government tries to control this outflow of wealth, but does not always succeed.

A recent high level panel organized by the UN in New York, at which your Editor was privileged to give evidence, came out clearly in favour of the urgent need of pressure from the world community for dismantling the fascist, oppressive, inhuman, white apartheid regime. But so long as U. S. A., U. K., France, West Germany and Holland refuse to take strong action, such dismantling will be delayed and turn out to be violent.

The U. N. General Assembly has passed a resolution for general sanctions against South Africa until they let go of their illegal occupation of Namibia, and their undemocratic and oppressive government in South Africa. 150 nations voted for it. Only ten voted against.

Why did some white western nations vote against such a resolution? Their alleged reasons may be different, but their real reasons seem to be four :

- (a) South Africa plus Namibia are a main source for Uranium, gold, diamonds and other minerals now exploited by white companies and they don't want the control of these to go into black hands.
- (b) South Africa has potential atomic weapon power. To give the government into the hands of the (80%) Black majority is to give atomic weapons to the Blacks of the world.
- (c) There is a lot of western investment in South Africa and Namibia and the western nations need time to amortize their investments before leaving the countries in Black hands.
- (d) Southern Africa is of great geo-political strategic importance for the control of the southern hemisphere—especially since Australia/New Zealand and South America have proved to be not too reliable allies. The white nations who control global power do not want to let go of their control of the Southern African strategic centre of the Southern hemisphere

But the course of history seems to be inexorable. At the UN panel discussion in September, the South African Chamber of Commerce, representing mainline white industrial power in Southern Africa, openly declared - for the first time - that they were committed to the dismantling of the apartheid regime. That was a surprise for all of us.

Why the delay then? It seems that forces are at work to divide the Black South Africans and the coloureds, already divided between the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress. What the corporations are looking for, while playing for time, is a group of Blacks who will agree to protect the interests of the companies and give the semblance of democracy - as is now the case in so many two-third world countries. Not a bad idea, though, provided there is no delay.

2. The Pope's Visit to India

His Holiness John Paul II, easily the most travelled Pope in history, will pay a visit to India in February 1986. The Christians of India will give a warm reception to the Pope in so far as the Roman Catholic Church permits that. So will the general public of this land, despite considerable opposition on the part of some Hindu groups.

The Pope is coming to India on a pastoral, not a political visit. He is first and foremost a religious leader, the head of the largest and most international of the Christian churches. He is, however, much more. Not merely because he is also technically the head of the Vatican State; but primarily because he is a symbol of the west and all that it has stood for in history. He is the successor of the Popes who gave authority over the whole world to the Kings or Queens of Spain and Portugal, and before that of Popes like Adrian IV (fl 1157) and Innocent III (fl 1198) who claimed that all royal or state authority was subordinate to the pontifical authority of the Pope. Was it not Pope Boniface VIII (1296-1302) who made that stupendous claim that both temporal and spiritual rule "are in the power of the Church; namely the spiritual and material swords; the one, indeed, to be wielded *for* the Church, the other *by* the Church; the former by the priest, the latter by the hand of Kings and Knights, but at the will and sufferance of the priest"? (Bull *Unicuique* *Laicos*, 25th February 1296).

I wonder if Pope John Paul II will say anything about what was done in India by the representatives of his predecessors like Archbishop Menezes of Goa at the end of the 16th century. As far as Indians are concerned, our first taste of western imperialism bears the stamp of the Popes' approval. Not the present pope, of course. But it will be interesting to hear if the present Pope has anything to say about what Archbishop Alexis de Menezes, who combined the two swords in himself, (was he not also the delegate of the Portuguese King?) did to the people of India four hundred years ago. Before Menezes John du Albuquerque was Archbishop of Goa while his brother was Viceroy of the King of Portugal, both under the 'padroado' or 'patronage' granted by Pope Leo X in 1514 to the Kings of Portugal over lands to be conquered in Africa and Asia.

Would the Pope, on his visit to India, be gracious enough, if not to apologize for what his predecessors have done to India, at least to condemn imperialism and neo colonialism? Many people in India look upon the Pope as the spiritual head of the community which still practices imperialism and neo-colonialism in sophisticated modern forms. Would the Pope's speeches show that he is aware of this fact?

We look forward to the Pope's visit with great anticipation. If he shows real sensitivity to the points that still hurt Indians, both Christian and non-Christian, in the role of the west vis-a-vis the Indian sub-continent, he may even win our hearts. Will he have a good word to say about the Non-Aligned Movement, and the leadership India is giving to that movement? The Pope obviously does not agree with the non-aligned position on South Africa, the Middle East or Central America, which is almost identical with the position of the World Council of Churches on these matters. Will he at least make a diplomatic tip of his hat to the N. A. M. ? It will be interesting to see.

As for the non-Roman Christians of India, who are now almost two fifths of the Christian population of India, are concerned, they will be friendly to the Pope as head of a sister Church. They will co-operate with Roman Catholics in showing honour and hospitality to the Pope. They will keep wondering : (a) whether the Pope's visit will make him a greater advocate of international socio-economic justice than he now is;

(b) whether the Pope's visit will mark a melting point in the fairly frozen ecumenical attitudes of the Roman Catholic hierarchy in this country;

and (c) whether the Pope will only teach or also learn from this land of the rishis and sages.

An Extraordinary Synod

(Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios)

The forthcoming (November 1985) extraordinary Synod of the Roman Catholic Church promises to be interesting. Its purpose is to assess the consequences of the 2nd Vatican Council in the last twenty years. It can very well turn out to be just a 20th anniversary celebration of a historic council. But it could also become an attempt on the part of the Roman Catholic Church to re-interpret the 2nd Vatican Council, and to draw limits within which alone the meaning of that Council is to be understood.

From a Christian perspective outside the great Roman Church, we all have to thank God for the monumental changes which that Council effected. It was a glacier melting, a huge ecclesiastical land-slide. The Roman Church has moved out from an era of rigid self-isolation and joined other Christians in the common search for the God-given unity of the Church.

Of course that Church has had to pay a heavy price for that opening. It did not have time to prepare its membership for the meeting with non-Catholics. New ideas swept into the Church in a tidal wave, actually drowning many in the ocean of doubt. Thousands of priests, monks and nuns left the service of the Church. National Catholic Churches, e.g. in Holland, began taking new lines that strained relationships with the Vatican.

The emergence of 'liberation theology' in Latin America looked almost like a defiance of theology made in Rome. The conservative rightist fulminations of Archbishop Lefevre in France constituted a less momentous challenge, but while it lasted, it created a lot of stress.

Pope John XXIII of blessed memory, who 'opened the windows' did not live to experience the fresh air and the gales and storms that swept in through that window. Simultaneously with announcing the Council, he created two new Secretariats in the Vatican which signified his interest. The Secretariat for Promoting the Unity of Christians opened the way for mutual acquaintance and the expression of genuine fellowship between Roman Catholic and other Christians and played

a powerful part in shaping the 2nd Vatican Council. The other office, the Congregation for the Eastern Rites was also intended by John XXIII to draw the Roman Catholic Church close to the Orthodox Churches; the Uniats however saw to it that nothing of the kind actually took place.

This year is also the 25th anniversary of the setting up of the Secretariat for Unity. Under the initial inspiration of Cardinal Bea and the wise leadership of Mgr (later Bishop and now Cardinal) Willebrands of Holland, that Secretariat quietly and carefully built up trusting relations with protestant, Anglican and Orthodox Churches. The meeting between Pope Paul VI and Byzantine Orthodox Patriarch Athenagoras of Constantinople in Jerusalem was a dramatic event of great promise - promise that turned out to be premature. Most of the heads of the Oriental Churches, with the notable exception of the Orthodox Churches in socialist countries and Greece, went to Rome and issued joint statements with the Pope. The Roman authorities were aware that the Ecumenical Patriarch was not an Orthodox Pope. They knew that the national Orthodox Churches were autocephalous and that they took their own decisions. They still over-estimated the influence of Patriarch Athenagoras in the Eastern churches. They too naively anticipated the Orthodox churches being guided by the Ecumenical Patriarch's actions.

Athenagoras himself, a genuinely ecumenical soul, was under pressure from the Turkish authorities to leave Turkey. He certainly used the friendliness of the Pope as a lever against the Turkish Government, along with that of the World Council of Churches and the American Greek Church. Paul VI genuinely wanted the schism of 11th and 12th centuries between the Latin and Greek churches to be healed. But that has not happened and the prospects remain very dim for the near future.

The Secretariat for Unity had more success with the Protestant and Anglican Churches. Perhaps more than the Roman Church was ready for. The new ideas that swept in were as renewing as disrupting. Clerical celibacy and the monastic vocation were questioned. Artificial birth control, which according to recent Roman teaching, is a violation of the *jus divinum*, was accepted by many Catholics as legitimate.

In the late Sixties Pope Paul VI was still very optimistic. His dream was that while the Roman Catholic Church had many differences

with the churches of the Reformation in matters of dogma and moral theology, ecumenical collaboration could be free in the area of service to humanity, in working for justice, peace and development. "Development is the new name of Peace" he declared towards the end of the first U. N. Development Decade.

This sentiment found an enthusiastic echo in the heart of the new activist General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, the late Eugene Carson Blake of the U. S. A. Development became the Central issue at the Fourth Assembly of the W. C. C. (Uppsala, 1968) which Blake directed. Blake shared the dream of Paul VI. Both the churches in the W. C. C. and R. C. agencies like Caritas, Misereor and the Diocesan charities were spending millions of dollars in service to the world. If the resources on both sides could be put together, the problems of poverty and under-development in the world could be finally solved or at least the way shown for the United Nations to follow. It was a noble dream. It looked feasible at the end of the Sixties. The Pope had put great trust in the Commission on Justice and Peace and the Secretariat for the Laity to do this kind of ecumenical collaboration without prejudice to the divergent positions in dogma and moral theology. Only in the realm of medical work one had to be careful not to touch the problems of abortion and artificial birth control.

As one moved into the Seventies the picture changed. The donor agencies on the W. C. C. and R. C. C. sides were not prepared to fuse their world kingdoms into an empire under joint control. The W. C. C.'s Commission of the Churches for Participation in Development (CCPD) was intended to be the first step in building this mighty instrument to save the world from poverty and under-development.

Paul VI was rather shocked, as ecumenical collaboration developed, to see how many priests and nuns, even in the staff of the Commission for Justice and Peace, had married and left the monastic vocation and priestly ministry. That Commission, under strong activist American leadership, was promoting ecumenical collaboration in many nations often creating structures not directly controlled by the national hierarchies. The wings of both Justice and Peace and the Laity Secretariat were soon clipped. They were reduced to mere study units and forbidden to be operating agencies.

Meanwhile, in 1965, the Joint working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the W. C. C. had been formed. The present writer was a member of this group for the first 12 years of its existence. There were 12 of us on either side. We got to know each other and to trust each other as persons. In the early years there was so much hope. We discussed freely many questions, including the membership of the RCC in the WCC. At that stage, there was no theological objection on the part of the R. C. C. There was only the question of preparing the way pastorally. In the early years we were still optimistic about greater collaboration in the areas of justice, peace and service to the world.

By the end of the Sixties there was a cooling of the enthusiasm. The main reason was obviously the anxiety of Roman Catholic authorities about the unity and integrity of their Church, strained by too many diversities of opinion, too much questioning of existing structures, too much erosion of highly centralised authority. People in high places were speaking of getting one's own house in order before too many doors were opened to the outside.

The seventies and eighties have been a period of stalling, straining to be correct in mutual relations, a polite coolness. The Joint Working Group became largely a staff job between the Secretariat for Unity and the W. C. C. producing reports which said little and recommended very few common actions.

While brakes are clearly applied at the centre, the wheel of the ecumenical movement keeps turning. At the local level many things have been going on, with or without the knowledge of the Vatican. In some countries R. C. bishops have tried to follow the central line, but many priests and lay people have gone ahead building new relations with non-Catholics. In many Catholic churches Roman Catholics share communion with non-catholics, without waiting for any official permission. In Latin America Base Communities practice a level of ecumenical fellowship beyond what is officially sanctioned. They pray together, study the Bible together, and act together for social change. Often as a community they share full ecumenical eucharistic communion. Something similar is happening in many parts of Europe and America. The Vatican actions against Catholic priests like Hans Kung and Leonardo Boff have provoked strong reactions among Catholics

and non-catholics. Latin American Catholics have the impression that Pope John Paul II is against "liberation theology" which to them is a source of great hope. A long tradition of submission to the Pope prevents many from speaking out in protest against his stated positions and actions.

It is in this context that the Extraordinary Synod meets in November. Some of these tensions will surely surface in that meeting. What are the achievements of Vatican II? The present writer was a delegated Observer at that Council. He can see some things very clearly :

- (a) The Council has certainly opened the doors for Roman Catholics everywhere to have more fruitful contact with non-Catholic Christians and with the world in general.
- (b) The Council has enabled some first steps for Roman Catholic dialogue with world religions, though very little progress has been made.
- (c) The Council has opened up dialogues between the R. C. C., and other Christian churches, Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox. This has helped overcome some of the anti-Romanism prevailing in the other churches. It has reduced mutual caricaturing among Christian churches. It has stimulated fresh theological reflection relating Christian thought more closely to common human problems.
- (d) The Council has made possible the full participation of Roman Catholic theologians in the W. C. C.'s Faith and order Commission, and the production of the common document on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry.

In the case of a big event like the Second Vatican Council, precise assessment of consequences is simply impossible. Second Vatican tried to balance First Vatican which put too much weight on the Papal Office. But it is precisely there that the Second Council has still far to go. From a point of view within the authentic tradition, the Roman claims have to be questioned at four points: (a) Universal jurisdiction over all Christians, (b) the divine origin of the Papal dignity and Petrine office, and (c) Communion with Rome as an essential element

for the fullness and unity of the Church (d) the assumption even within the limits of the Roman Church, that bishops are some sort of 'Vicars' of the Pope deriving their authority from him, and that the College of Bishops is therefore incomplete without the Pope.

On these issues, Vatican II made but little progress beyond Vatican I. It is unlikely that the Extraordinary Synod will go much further again. We will wait for a Vatican III of some kind before the prospects for Christian unity become brighter.

"Ecumenicity" of a Synod and the Acceptance of the Ecumenical Synods

(Deacon Dr. B. Varghese)

The number of the Ecumenical Synods is an important problem in the dialogue between the churches of the Oriental Orthodox, byzantine and latin traditions. The Latin church has a list of 21 "Ecumenical Councils"¹, whereas the byzantine tradition accepts the first seven among them as ecumenical. The Oriental Orthodox churches accept the first three Ecumenical Councils only.

In this article, we are studying the *norm* of the "ecumenicity" of a Council (i. e. Synod) in the context of the dialogue between the oriental and the Byzantine Orthodox churches. The subject of our study has been inspired by an article of Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Myre, who holds the *immutable* nature of the seven "Ecumenical Councils" and the "acceptance" of the list of the seven "Ecumenical Councils" as preable for the unity between the oriental and the Byzantine Orthodox Churches.² This paper would not be an answer to the Most Rev. Metropolitan. However, the present writer thinks that open discussions and scientific researches could lead us to a theological consensus on the list of the Ecumenical Councils.

In spite of the divergence on the Council of Chalcedon (and the later three "Ecumenical Councils"), the Byzantine and the Oriental Orthodox Churches "profess in common the conciliar structure of the Church"³. The two families of the eastern tradition share the same

1. According Fr. Yves Congar, in the Latin church, there is no official list of the Ecumenical Councils.

See "La Reception Comme realite ecclesologique", in *Rev. Sc. Phil. Theol.* 56 (1972) pp. 369-403 and *Concilium* 8 (1972), 500-514.

2. Metr. Chrysostomos of Myre, "Le dialogue entre l'Eglise Orthodoxe et les Eglises de l'ancien Orient. Appreciations et perspectives", in *Proche Orient Chretien* 30 (1980) 14-57

3. *ibid* p. 37

theology of councils. Even the criteria of the ecumenicity of a council are the same for both of them.

1. The Conciliar Structure of the Church

The notion of the conciliarity is "the vision of the church as communion (koinonia)"⁴. The Koinonia of the eucharistic assembly constitutes the ground on which the conciliarity finds its *raison d'être*⁵. That is to say, the conciliarity has its foundation in the vision of the church as a community of love and worship. In a larger sense, the notion of the conciliarity could be applied to all sacramental gatherings of the church. As Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios says: "(the conciliarity) belongs to the structure of the church at all levels."⁶

The conciliarity cannot be reduced merely to the jurisdictional structure of the church. It is the manifestation of the nature of the church. A council is, therefore not simply an administrative institution. According to J. Meyendorff, the first councils of the church were not "organized" or "prepared". No scriptural or ecclesiastical authority had even instituted them, nor gave them procedural directions.⁷

2. The authority of a Council :

A council is not, therefore, a Jurisdictional institution. As the eucharistic community manifests the unity of the Church, a council is an assembly which expresses the unity of the church in the Apostolic faith⁸. A council proclaims the true faith against all heresies. That proclamation is authoritative for the eastern churches, because the council expresses the *consensus* of local churches. The *consensus* of the churches is the witness of the apostolic faith which they preserve.

4. See. The communique: Third Ecumenical consultation between Theologians of the Oriental Orthodox churches and the Roman Catholic Church, in *Wort und Wahrheit*, (Supplementary issue No. 3, Dec. 1976), p. 223.

5. J. D. Zizioulas, "The Development of Conciliar structures to the time of the First Ecumenical Council", in *Councils and the Ecumenical Movement*, (Geneva, 1968), P. 41

6. *Wort und Wahrheit* (Dec. 1976), P. 141.

7. J. Mayendorff, "What is an Ecumenical Council?" in *St. Vlad. Sem. Quart.* 17-4 (1973), p. 260

8. J. Mayendorff, "The Orthodox Concept of the church", *St. Vlad. Sem. Quart.* 6-6 (1962), p-62.

But, in the history of the church, there are councils which had erred and had produced heterodox formulations (eg. a number of councils during the arian controversy). Those councils were rejected by the spirit of truth which dwells in the church. Most of those assemblies were largely represented by the different parts of the Roman Empire. In spite of the large representation or participation, those assemblies were considered merely as "pseudo-councils."

In this context arises the question of the authority of a council. What is the criterion for the authority of a council? What is the criterion of the "conciliarity" of an ecclesiastical assembly. The eastern theologians have clearly acknowledged the "lack in the orthodox church of a clearly defined, precise and permanent criterion of truth, beside God Himself, Christ and the Holy Spirit abiding in the church".⁹ However, the general consensus of the churches, which is the work of the Holy Spirit, is the only criterion for the authority of a council. Therefore, a Council is authoritative for the church, so far it is faithful to the apostolic tradition, in its formulations, and acts, and that faithfulness is witnessed by the whole church by a general *consensus*. It is that general *consensus*, or the general acceptance of the whole church which gave authority to some local councils such as the council of Laodicea, of which we know very little.

3. "Ecumenicity" of a Council :

The adjective *oikoumenike* etymologically means "that which belongs to the whole *oekoumene* (= inhabitable space of the surface of the earth). In fact, this word was used in a limited sense to mean "that which belongs to the whole Roman Empire". In the Christian antiquity, the word *oikoumenike* has a spatial connotation.¹⁰ Hence "ecumenical council" could signify a council which has the participation of all the churches of the world. But, in fact, in the history of the church, no council could claim to be "ecumenical" in the spatial sense of the term. None of the so called "Ecumenical Councils" had the participation of all the churches of the world. Even the Council of Nicea (325) was not represented by the whole church. John of Persia (and India?) may be the only bishop from outside the Roman Empire

9. J. Mayendorff, "The Orthodox concept of the church, p. 65.

10. *he ekklesia oikoumenike* and *Synodos oikoumenike*

who participated the Council of Nicea, probably because he happened to be in the Empire at that time

The Councils of Nicea and Ephesus (431) were largely dominated by the bishops of the eastern part of the Roman Empire. The council of Constantinople (381) had not been represented by even a single western bishop. Therefore the "ecumenicity" of a council could not signify a universal participation.

But the Byzantine churches used to give a spatial sense to the Ecumenical councils, because an Ecumenical Council implied the participation of all the churches of the Byzantine Empire. In this context the "ecumenicity" was limited to the Byzantine Empire. The empire and the emperor have been disappeared. So the spatial sense of the word "ecumenical" is no more valid. As says Fr. J. Meyendorff "A simple transposition of the Byzantine criteria of 'ecumenicity' to our own time is therefore obviously impossible. With the disappearance of the Empire, these criteria have necessarily disappeared also. Only the concept of an episcopal *consensus*, which the 'ecumenical councils' reflected in as much as they were recognised by the church remains fully valid".¹¹

(i) "Ecumenicity" and "Catholicity"

(A) As we have observed, the word "ecumenicity" cannot be reduced to its spatial sense. It is to be understood in the light of the meaning "catholicity". The "Catholicity" of the church is not simply its spatial universality. It is above all the integrity, the integrality, the permanent and universal truth of the church. "Catholicity" signifies the manifestation of the fulness of the life of the church in time and space, in the local church, in the life of the faithful, bishops, priests and monks. The "Catholicity" of a church is the "incarnation" of the apostolic life (i.e. faith and tradition) in the life of a local church, i.e. in the life of every member of a eucharistic gathering. It is the faithfulness to the apostolic tradition, the permanent truth that our Lord had handed over to his apostles. Every local church (i.e. eucharistic gathering) which lives that "Catholicity" is the local manifestation of the

11. "What is an Ecumenical Council", p. 267.

Catholic church.¹² A local church, so far it is faithful to the Apostolic Tradition, is catholic.

(B) In the Eastern tradition, as we have stated above, there is no definite criterion to decide the ecumenicity of a council. Any ecumenical council had ever made decisions neither on the convocation nor on the criteria of an ecumenical council, whereas we could find such decisions on local, diocesan or provincial councils. The Councils of Sardica (343) Rimini (359) Ephesus (449), Constantinople (754) were convoked as "ecumenical". But they were eventually rejected or accepted only as "local councils".

(C) As we have already noted, none of the "Ecumenical Councils" enjoyed a universal participation. Therefore the universal participation is not a norm of the "ecumenicity" of a council. But the eastern theologians propose two other norms. (a) The role of the emperor in the convocation, deliberation and ratification of a council. (b) The acceptance of the council as "ecumenical" by the local churches as *post facto*.

(D) The imperial convocation of an Ecumenical Council:

Kedrenus, a Greek historian of the 11th century holds imperial convocation as indispensable for defining an ecumenical council. The first three universally accepted Ecumenical Councils, and the later four "Ecumenical Councils" of the Byzantine church were convoked by the emperors. The authority of an ecumenical council depended on the emperor, because it was he who convoked them, decided their composition and the questions to be discussed by them. It is important to note that, when the empire disappeared, the Ecumenical Councils also had disappeared from the life of the Byzantine church.¹³

(E) The acceptance of an Ecumenical Council:

The acceptance of a council as "ecumenical" is the recognition of the truth that it had witnessed. The "acceptance" is the universal *consensus* on the fulness of the truth which had been manifested by it. When a council manifests the "catholicity" (faithfulness to the apostolic tradition) in its theology, decrees, canons, it is accepted universally.

12. See N. Afanassieff, "Statio Orbis", in IRENIKON 35 (1965), 65-75.

13. See N. Afanassieff, "Le concile dans la theologie Orthodoxe russe", in IRENIKON 35 (1965) p. 319.

Therefore, a council had been acknowledged "ecumenical" by the whole church, so far it is catholic, ie faithful to the apostolic tradition which had already been proclaimed by the preceeding councils and the theologians.

The acceptance of a council by the whole body of the church was not always immediately received. The council of Nicea did not receive universal acceptance for more than fifty years. It was only after the council of Constantinople (381), that Nicea had been generally accepted as ecumenical council. It was by acceptance, not by participation, that the council of Constantinople (381) became 'ecumenical' for the latin church. (As we have said above, not a single western delegate was present at Constantinople) The decisions of the so-called 7th ecumenical Council (Nicea II, 787) were for a long time without acceptance in the Latin Church. The council of Frankfurt (794) had even rejected them, and later the Latin church accepted the council as 'ecumenical'. Even the council of Chalcedon was accepted only in 649 at the Latran Council "in the name of the whole Western Church." 4

4. The place of the Ecumenical councils in the life of the Church.

Ecumenical Council is not a permanent institution of the church. As says Fr. Afanassieff: "For the Orthodox conscience, the ecumenical councils are an exceptional phenomenon in the life of the church, a phenomenon, which could perhaps, not be repeated".¹⁵ That is to say, an Ecumenical council is not something which is inevitable for the continuity of the life of the church. The church could continue to live without them. The pre-nicean church existed 2½ centuries without them. The Oriental Orthodox churches have lived 15½ centuries (since 451) without them and the byzantine churches 12 centuries (since 787).

An Ecumenical council is not the manifestation of the universal structure of the church.¹⁶ It is "*un phenomene exceptionnel*" as Fr. Afanassieff Says.¹⁷ An "exceptional phenomenon" of the life of the church could not be a hindrance for the unity of the churches.

14. c f. A. Grillmeir, "The Reception of Chalcedon in the Roman Catholic church", Ecc. Review 13 (1970), p. 391.

15. "Le Concile dans la theologie Orthodoxe russe" p. 329.

16. c f. Metr Paulos Mar Gregorios *op. cit.* p.140.

17. "Le Concile dans la theologie...", p. 329

5. Ecumenical Councils: Three or Seven ?

Inspite of the ecclesiological convergence, the Oriental and the Byzantin Orthodox churches have not reached a consensus on the number of the Ecumenical Councils. The four later 'Ecumenical councils' of Byzantin tradition (Chalcedon-451, Constantinople 553, Constantinople 680-81, Nicea 787) raise the question of "acceptance" for the Oriental Orthodox Churches.

The theologians of both sides have discussed the possibility of formulating a 'hermeneutical declaration' to find a solution on the question of the council of Chalcedon. Some byzantin theologians are reluctant to formulate such a common declaration. They hold the "immutable nature" (*a-metakinitos*) of the council of Chalcedon.¹⁸

The Oriental Orthodox theologians also accept the "immuability" of the first three Ecumenical Councils. No future Council would have the authority to add to, or to alter the dogmatic declarations (even canoniques) of the first three Ecumenical Councils. No Council could alter the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, which is also a liturgical formula. The dogmatic decisions of any other council could not claim the same validity as the *credo*. As Metr. Paulos Mar Gregorios rightly says : "not all councils or their decrees have the same validity".¹⁹

Can the council of Chalcedon claim the immutable character ? The "fifth Ecumenical council" of Constantinople (553) witnesses against any claim of immuability ascribed to Chalcedon. The Chalcedon acquitted the nestorian doctors such as Theodoret of Cyrus (with his writings against the council of Ephesus-431 and St. Cyril of Alexandria) and Ibas of Edessa. Both of them had been condemned at the council of Ephesus in 449. The "fifth Ecumenical Council" (553) condemned Theodoret and Ibas with their writings on the ground of nestorianism.²⁰ One of the main decisions of Chalcedon

18. Metr. Chrysostomos of Myre, *art. cit* p. 29-30.

19. *op. cit.* p. 140

20. The "5th Ecumenical Council" of Constantinople (553) condemned the Three Chapters, i.e. the person and works of Theodore of Mopsuestia, the writings of Theodoret against Cyril and the letter of Ibas to Maris. The Council proceeded its condemnation inspite of Pope Vigilius' strong opposition. The Pope was aware of the fact that the new council would be "discontinuous" with Chalcedon. So in 553, the Council of Constantinople removed Pope's name from the diptyches (7th session). Vigilius finally agreed to accept the Council and favoured the condemnation of the Three Chapters. Despite of the Papal acceptance, the Council of Constantinople was not immediately recognised 'Ecumenical' in the West. Milan and Aquileia even broke off communion with Rome. The relation with Milan were restored by the end of the 6th Century and with Aquileia by the end of the 7th Century.

was thus indirectly condemned by the 'fifth Ecumenical Council'! Therefore it is clear that Chalcedon could not claim the immutable character that the church accords to the first three Ecumenical Councils.

We do not think that any Byzantine theologian would say that the Chalcedonian definition of faith could be attributed the same rank as of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed. The first, which is "discontinuous" with the christological terminologies used by Cyril of Alexandria and the council of Ephesus (431), is defended by the Byzantine theologians as a theological/doctrinal explanation of the Christology of Ephesus. The Nicene-Constantinopolitan creed is a liturgical formula, whereas the Chalcedonian formula is merely a theological definition. The creed could neither be added nor be altered. But a theological formula is open to discussions and reformulations in terminologies faithful to the tradition. The "fifth Ecumenical Council" itself shows that the decisions of Chalcedon are not immutable.

Then arises the question of the later three "Ecumenical Councils". The "fifth Ecumenical Council" (553), with its condemnation of the three chapters, was indirectly asserting the pre-Chalcedonian tradition. Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret and Ibas had already been condemned in 449 at the council of Ephesus (the so-called "lactrocinium"). One of the decisions of *lactrocinium* (!) became the only decision of the "fifth Ecumenical Council". Even the sixth and the seventh "Ecumenical Councils" (Constantinople 681 and Nicea 787) did not go to the fundamentals of the faith of the undivided church.

Conclusion :

The later four 'Ecumenical' Councils of the Byzantine tradition could not claim the "immuability" which had been accorded by the church to the first three Ecumenical Councils. The council of Chalcedon did not reflect the catholicity of the church (the fidelity to the apostolic tradition as it is asserted by the first three Ecumenical Councils) in its theological spirit. The only possible solution to this difficult situation is to search for a "hermeneutical declaration" of our christological consensus. We should continue our prayers, dialogues and scientific researches of the documents of faith. We could seek the unity on the basis of the first three Ecumenical councils. The list of seven Councils is precious one for the Byzantine tradition and it should

remain as it is. Any church could not insist others to "accept" its traditions, or to "reject" the traditions which have been preserved through centuries. We could envisage the unity on the basis of the diversity of theological and liturgical traditions. On the ground of mutual respect and understanding, let us continue to hope for the unity of the two heirs of the eastern tradition.

Inter - Orthodox Symposium on Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology
Brookline, M. A., U. S. A., —
JUNE 11 — 18, 1985

REPORT

I. Introduction

1. We give thanks to the Triune God that we, hierarchs and theologians representing the Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox Churches, members of the World Council of Churches, were able to gather together at the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology in Brookline, Massachusetts, USA. Our task was to help clarify a number of questions which might arise for the Orthodox Churches when they consider their official response to the document on *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (BEM) adopted in Lima (1982) by the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches.

2. We would like to express our gratitude to the hosts of the meeting, the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America and the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, as well as to the Orthodox Task Force of the World Council of Churches and the Faith and Order Commission which made possible such a widely representative gathering. We are also grateful for the opportunity of meeting with several Orthodox parishes in the Boston region.

His Eminence Archbishop Iakovos, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, formally welcomed at the opening session the members of the Symposium together with other distinguished guests from the Orthodox and the other churches from the region.

3. The Moderator of the Symposium was His Eminence Prof. Dr. Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Myra (Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople). Papers were presented on the following topics: "General Introduction on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry in the

Present Ecumenical Situation" (Rev. Dr. Gunther Gassmann, Rev. Dr. Gennadios Limouris); "The Meaning of Reception in Relation to Results of Ecumenical Dialogue on the Basis of BEM" (Prof. Dr. Nikos Nissiotis, Response by Bishop Nerses Bozabalian); "The Significance and Status of Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry in the Ecumenical Movement" (Archbishop Kirill of Smolensk); "The BEM Document in Romanian Orthodox Theology—The Present Stage of Discussions" (Metropolitan Dr. Antony of Transylvania); "The Question of the Reception of Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry in the Orthodox Church in the Light of its Ecumenical Commitment" (Rev. Prof. Dr. Theodore Stylianopoulos, Response: Rev. Dr. K. M. George); "Tasks Facing the Orthodox in the 'Reception Process' of Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry" (Rev. Prof. Dr. Thomas Hopko, Response: Metropolitan Prof. Dr. Chrysostomos of Myra).

4. On the basis of these papers, plenary discussions on them, and deliberations in four discussion groups, the participants in this Symposium respectfully submit the following considerations and recommendations.

II. The Significance of BEM and the responsibility of the Orthodox

1. It appears to us that we, as Orthodox, should welcome the Lima document as an experience of a new stage in the history of the ecumenical movement. After centuries of estrangement, hostility and mutual ignorance, divided Christians are seeking to speak together on essential aspects of ecclesial life, namely baptism, eucharist, and ministry. This process is unique in terms of the wide attention which the Lima document is receiving in all the churches. We rejoice in the fact that Orthodox theologians have played a significant part in the formulation of this document.

2. In general we see BEM as a remarkable ecumenical document of doctrinal convergence. It is, therefore, to be highly commended for its serious attempt to bring to light and express today "the faith of the Church through the ages" (Preface to BEM, p. x).

3. In many sections, this faith of the Church is clearly expressed, on the basis of traditional biblical and patristic theology. There are other sections in which the Orthodox find formulations which they cannot accept and where they would wish that the effort to adhere to

the faith of the Church be expressed more accurately. As often stated in the document itself, in some areas the process needs to be continued with more thinking, further deepening and clarification.

4. Finally, there are sections in which a terminology is used which is not that to which the Orthodox are accustomed. However, in some such cases, beneath the unfamiliar terminology, one can discover that the meaning is in fact close to the traditional faith. In other parts of BEM we notice a terminology which is familiar to the Orthodox but which can be understood in a different way.

5. We also think that the Orthodox Churches have the duty to answer responsibly the invitation of the Faith and Order Commission mainly for three reasons:

- a. because here we are concerned with a matter of faith—and it has been the insistence of the Orthodox Churches for some time that the World Council of Churches should focus its attention especially on questions of faith and unity;
- b. because the Orthodox have fully participated in the preparation of the text from the beginning and made a substantial contribution to it;
- c. because it is important to have the response of all the Orthodox Churches, and not just some of them.

III. Response and Reception

1. Both at the Sixth General Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Vancouver (1983) and at the last meeting of the Central Committee (1984) of the WCC the Orthodox undertook to respond to BEM as a matter of obligation and commitment with a view to furthering the ecumenical movement.

2. We would like to distinguish between the immediate response of the individual Orthodox member Churches of the World Council of Churches to the BEM document and the long-range form of the reception of the text in the orthodox tradition. We hold that the notion of reception of the BEM document here is different from the classical Orthodox understanding of the reception of the decrees and decisions of the Holy Councils.

3. Reception of the BEM document means that we recognize in this text some of the common and constitutive elements of our faith in the matter of baptism, eucharist, and ministry so that we may stand together as far as possible to bear witness to Jesus Christ in our world and to move towards our common goal of unity. Thus reception at this stage is a step forward in the "process of our growing together in mutual trust .." towards doctrinal convergence and ultimately towards "communion with one another in continuity with the apostles and the teachings of the universal Church." (Preface to BEM. p. ix)

4. Reception of the BEM document as such does not necessarily imply an ecclesiological or practical recognition of the ministry and sacraments of non-Orthodox churches. Such a recognition would require a special action of the Orthodox Churches.

5. As an initial step towards this kind of reception we would wish to see official action on the part of the Orthodox churches to facilitate the use of the BEM document for study and discussion on different levels of the Church's life so that the Church evaluates the document with a view to the ultimate unity of all churches.

6. In this process of discernment the Orthodox churches should be sensitive to the similar process of evaluation of the text and of the process of bilateral dialogues in the member churches of the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church. Thus our evaluation will be fully informed of the ecumenical reflections and experiences stimulated by this text.

IV. Some points for Further Clarification

1. We Orthodox recognize many positive elements in BEM which express significant aspects of the apostolic faith. Having affirmed this initial appreciation of BEM, we offer some examples among the issues which we believe need further clarification and elaboration. There are also issues which are not addressed in the text.

2. In the section on *Baptism*, we note:

- a. the relationship between the unity of the Church and baptismal unity (para. 6);
- b. the role of the Holy Spirit in baptism and consequently the relationship between baptism and chrismation (confirmation), linking

water and the Spirit in incorporating members into the Body of Christ (para 5;14);

- c. the role of exorcism and renunciation of the Evil One in the baptismal rite (para. 20);
- d. the terms "sign", "sacramental sign", "symbol", "celebrant" (para. 22), "ethical life" and other terms throughout the text.

3. In the section on *Eucharist*, we note:

- a. the relationship of the eucharist to ecclesiology in the light of the eucharistic nature of the Church and the understanding of the eucharist as "the mystery of Christ" as well as "the mystery of the Church". (para 1);
- b. the relationship between participation in the eucharist and unity of faith;
- c. the role of the Holy Spirit in the eucharist, with special reference to *anamnesis* in its relation to *epiclesis* (para. 10; 12);
- d. the relationship between the eucharist and repentance, confession, and reconciliation to the eucharistic congregation;
- e. the meaning of sacrifice (para. 8), real presence (para. 13), ambassador (para 29) and the implications of "for the purpose of communion" in regard to the reservation of the eucharistic elements (para 15);
- f. the participation of baptized children in the eucharist.

4. In the section on *Ministry*, we note:

- a. the link between ordained ministry today and the ministry of the apostles and apostolic succession (para 10; 35);
- b. the distinction between the priesthood, of the entire people of God and the ordained priesthood, especially in light of Pauline teaching on the different functions of the members of the one Body of Christ (para 17 & commentary);
- c. issues related to the ordination of women to the priesthood (para 18), including the way in which the problem is formulated in the text of BEM;

- d. the relation between bishop, presbyter, and deacon;
- e. the relation between *episcopos*, the bishop, and the eucharist.

V. Tasks Facing the Orthodox Churches

In view of future work in connection with BEM, we offer the following considerations and recommendations.

1. Steps should be taken to enable translation and distribution of the BEM document in the languages of all Orthodox Churches.

2. Orthodox Churches should see to it that the BEM document is studied and discussed in clergy and laity groups, theological faculties and seminaries, clergy associations, as well as in inter confessional groups.

3. Orthodox Churches should be open to reading BEM and to responding to it in a spirit of critical self-examination, particularly in the area of current practices in churches and parishes. They should also use this process as a stimulus and encouragement for the renewal of their life.

4. In studying and evaluating BEM, the Orthodox should move beyond the theological scholasticism of recent centuries by reappropriating the creativity and dynamics of biblical and patristic theology. This will enable them to move towards broader perspectives and to think more deeply about certain issues.

5. In their ongoing bilateral conversation, Orthodox Churches should take BEM into account.

VI. Perspectives for future Faith and Order work

In view of the future work of the Faith and Order Commission and WCC as a whole, we recommend the following perspectives for a proper interrelationship between BEM and the Faith and Order study projects "Towards the Common Expression of the Apostolic Faith Today" and "The unity of the Church and the Renewal of Human community".

1. The process of an ecumenical reappropriation of the apostolic faith and tradition as it was begun in the BEM document should be consciously continued in the two other study projects.

2. There should be a clear understanding that baptism, eucharist, and ministry are essential elements of the apostolic faith and tradition. At the same time, they are fundamental expressions of the witness and service of the Church for today's world and its needs, its concerns, and its renewal. Renewal of both the life of the Church and of the world cannot be separated from the liturgical and the sacramental life of the Church nor from its pastoral responsibility.

3. These two other projects should also be open to insights and suggestions expressed in the responses of the churches to BEM and profit from them.

4. The Lima document highlights the important relationship between the "rule of faith" and the "rule of prayer", to which the Orthodox are so deeply committed. Therefore we hope that in the two other study projects of Faith and Order this significant insight is seriously taken into account as well.

5. We further recommend that one important point in future work of the Faith and Order Commission in relationship to BEM should be the clarification of theological terminology and of linguistic problems in translations. This seems to be necessary in view of the heading "Ministry" of the third section of BEM and terms such as "sign", "reception" and "believer's/adult baptism".

6. Starting from a clarification of the vision of the Church which undergirds BEM, the future work of Faith and Order should concentrate on ecclesiology by bringing together the ecclesiological perspectives in BEM, in the responses of the Churches to BEM, and in the other study projects of Faith and Order.

We, the participants in the Symposium, experienced this meeting as an occasion for exchanging our views and clarifying common perspectives. We saw in it also an important means for furthering contacts and cooperation among the Orthodox Churches and thereby promoting our conciliar spirit.

Prayer with the Harp of the Spirit

(Vols. II and III)

I had the joy and privilege of knowing Fr. Bede Griffiths and Fr. Francis Acharya of Kurisumalai Ashram at close quarters ever since they came from the West and made a deep impression in favour of ecumenism in Kerala 27 years ago. I have visited the former in Santhivanam since he moved to Tamil Nadu. Both these men of prayer are being used by the Holy Spirit for courageous pioneering in theological and philosophical consensus and the deepening of the prayer-life of the faithful. Fr. Bede is writing solid books for an international market and Fr. Francis is translating and updating the prayers of the ancient Syrian Church into English and making this Church known in the four quarters of the earth. We all owe a deep debt of gratitude to both these men of God.

The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church

(Zondervan) is right in pointing out that "Syriac literature is almost entirely Christian; much of the literary activity was centered upon the Edessan School of the persians until its closure by com mand of the emperor Zeno, in 489". At present there is no strong East Syrian or West Syrian Church with the financial means and the know-how for making its treasures available in modern international languages like English. Western Churches must be given the credit for even the modern editions and translations of the rich writings of Fathers like Severus of Antioch. Even the Kurusumala Ashram could not have been able to finance the publication of a multi volume *Prayer with the Harp of the Spirit* without the assistance of the Congregation for Oriental Churches, Rome. They are reasonably priced: (Vol. I. Vol. II. Rs. 46, Vol. III. Rs. 70) Rs.27,

The Volumes now available are :

Vol. I *The Book of Common Prayer of the Syrian Church*. The revised Second edition by Fr. Francis is the first volume of six volume series.

Vol. II part i. Seasons of the Annunciation, Nativity, and Epiphany of our Lord, pp xxix + 634 (1982)

Vol. III part II Seven weeks of the Fast of our Lord and of His Resurrection. pp. xxxvii + 649 (Pentecost 1985)

The question is 'Where are the missing parts?' Will they appear when the morning prayers are also translated. The answer of Francis Acharya is, "we never entertained the idea of undertaking a full translation of the *Penqitho*. Our translation was made gradually, for the use of our community....." (Vol. III p. 647) There is also the following promise, "We do not know of any English edition of the Harmonized Gospel for the Holy Week, but we hope to publish it in our fifth volume, which will be otherwise a Lectionary, indicating the readings, yet with a word of life from each reading" (p. 648). The five volumes that Kurisumala Ashram will complete, would contain mostly Evening prayers and Night vigils and some modern additions like the commemoration of St. Francis Xavier on Dec. 3rd (Vol 11, Pt i. pp. 330-343).

Vol. III part ii contains letters of appreciation by H. H. Baselius Marthoma Mathews I, HB Baselius Paulos II, H. G. Benedict Mar Gregorios, H. E. Isaac Mar Youhanon and H. E. Cyril Mar Baselius, to indicate that the praiseworthy publication is gratefully received by the Orthodox and Catholic Churches. To quote from the letter of Baselius Marthoma Mathews I,

"The mystical and pneumatical aspects of the prayers containing the gems of Oriental piety and spirituality, which originated and grew up in the cradle of the Christian East, will kindle in the hearts of the votaries the fire of the Holy Spirit and elevate their minds to the heavenly spheres, to the throne of God which should always be the end and aim of our prayers". Bishop Cyril Mar Baselius writes among other things, "Your work will always be remembered with admiration and praised as unique".

The self-criticism of the Malankara rite of the Catholic Church by Fr. Francis is reflected in the following quotation from the Introduction to III. ii :

".....the Church abstains from the celebration of the Holy Qurbana during the three days of mounting opposition to Jesus which preceded the institution by our Lord, at the Last Supper. This ancient tradition common

to all Oriental Churches is now little understood and consequently ignored by the Malankara Catholic Church. When in 1930 the Orthodox Archbishop Mar Ivanios came into communion with Rome, he asked his priests to abstain from celebrating Holy Qurbana these three days. The priests however, could not resist the pressure of the latin custom favouring the multiplication of sacramental celebrations. Such a practice follows almost inevitably from a theology of the sacraments explaining their efficacy in the latin formula *ex opere operato* while giving little attention to their true nature which is that of signs or symbols.....Yet we felt we could still make it our own practice"

Another characteristic is the courage to up-date, add, amend in the spirit of the *aggiornamento*, initiated by Second Vatican. About twenty hymns of the Vedas, Upanishads and Bhagavadgita were added in Vol I, the Book of Common Prayer. Progressive Roman Catholic theologians may appreciate this, though this Reviewer doubts whether such approval would be universal. The *Journal of Theological Reflection*, published by *Vidyajyoti* reviews the book as follows. "This is a beautiful example in the field of liturgical prayer, of *aggiornamento* and adaptation to the Indian situation. It is faithful to its roots, yet non-static. It opens us to the religious tradition of India, yet remains deeply Christian. It is Syrian in inspiration, yet universal in appeal..." III. (ii)

A Cursory Look at the Contents

It is significant that the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed is translated without the *filioque* clause. The Creed in the Lima Liturgy is also without "and the Son". I hope the Holy Father will ask all the churches to recite the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Symbol without the unwarranted later addition, *as in this prayer with the Harp of the Spirit viz* ".....who proceeds from the Father and with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified....." This is a version acceptable to the East and the West. (III...ii. p. 2)

The centrality of the *Holy Trinity* in *Penqitho* is well brought out in the translation. The following three quotations from II, i will be sufficient to what the appetite of the reader to use and study all the volumes:

"Praise to the one God who is revealed in unity and believed in Trinity; Being on high who is known in three persons and praised in one power the one hidden Father who sent the new tidings to Nazareth; the one worshipful Son who dwelt in the Virgin and confirmed the tidings; the one Holy Spirit who by his descent accomplished the wonder..." (p. 57)

"Praise...to the Hidden Being who was manifested in the river Jordan the Glorious Light unceasingly drawing upon us and revealed in Trinity; the Father with the sound of whose voice the hearing of John was delighted; the Son with the touch of whom the hand of John was delighted; the Holy Spirit with the sight of whom the eyes of John were delighted; three eternal persons one true God. To him belongs glory, honour and adoration, at the time of the night vigil....." (p. 159)

"Praise...to the Unsearchable God, who while he is One God is praised and worshipped in Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and while He is Three is reckoned as One God, from whom and by whom and through whom is the establishment of all that was and that will be in heaven and on earth. To him belongs glory, honour and adoration..." (p. 496)

To me, the Holy Trinity is the ultimate basis for THE THEOLOGY OF A CLASSLESS SOCIETY (See my book, C. L. S., Madras). It is faith in an all inclusive Monotheism, uniting plurality and singularity in the ontological being of God as Love. This Social God should not only be worshipped, but also emulated not only in Orthodoxy but also in model *orthopraxis*.

Kenotic Christology is also seen in a number of prayers in *Pengitho*.

"Your love has taken hold of you and has lowered you to our poverty. Your love has made you infant, Your love has made you a man. You have reduced your

greatness and you have extended it. Blessed is your power to decrease and blessed is your power to increase" (454)

A Chorus that is repeated a number of times during the Good Friday gives thus:

"Blessed is your passion, our Lord, which you endured for us Blessed is your humiliation for our sake." (III. ii. p. 529)

This self-humiliation is to be followed by all Christians who worship Him:

"And let us share in your sufferings, That we may have part in the blessings of Your Kingdom". (p. 533)

The tragedy of present day Christianity is that, its image is one of comfortable life, if not luxurious life-style. When the Church becomes self-emptying as her Lord, it will begin to grow again even in India.

Hope Of Life to Come is the incentive for self-denial. Death, resurrection and eschatological hope are inter-wined in many prayers.

"Christ our God, grant us by a renewed faith in You and the testimony of good works to prepare ourselves for the celebration of the Holy Passover of Your Blessed Passion, Death and Resurrection, that we may be found worthy of the wedding feast which does not come to an end, we beseech You and we will say three times, Lord have mercy... (p 186) Are we not living in a time when worldliness has blinded our inner eyes and we are impoverished of the Hope of Eternal Life. I am afraid, many Liberation theologians have to be liberated from the bondage of mere historicity, inspite of the fact that Salvation is also liberation from the bondage to Capitalism".

Repentance is perhaps one of the chief marks of Orthodox prayers. Some one has said that the Orthodox Christians have only one prayer and that is *Kyrieleyson* (Lord have mercy). This is accepted by us as

a compliment. The poignancy of penitence is in innumerable prayers. To quote St. Peter's penitential prayer,

"He had promised thrones to the Twelve
But who will He make to sit on the throne I have lost?
Because I have abandoned it, this throne will no more
to receive me,
for love that is not firm cannot sit upon it. I
have lost it for ever" (p. 528)

One of the prayers of the Night Vigil on the fourth Thursday of the Great Fast is typical:

"Sons of the Gospel, wash your garments and came to the wedding feast. Do not come with an unclean garment, this is not suited for the feast. The Bridegroom will come and look at the guests sitting at the table, And if any one has not a clean garment, He will cast him out". (p. 223)

of all the psalms, the penitential Psalm 51 is recited every morning and often.

Innovations and Additions

The notes on the Prayer Services after the Notes on the Introduction are as helpful as the detailed Introduction in the Second and Third volumes. Naturally the Notes in the Second Volume are more exhaustive than those of the third. I can appreciate the Western ethos of the author who substituted the Eastern *stomenkalos* (Let us stand well) and the response *Kurie eleison* (Lord have mercy on us) with the Western, 'Let us lift up our hearts...We lift them up the Lord) on the ground that the Eastern is martial, 'a Greek acclamation which passed into the Syrian', but I feel that the change has brought into the Eastern prayers an unnatural Western form. (See Note 2 on p. 627 of II. i). In a number of instances, the author repeats the sentence, "it came to the Syrian Catholics through Rome" (18, p. 629). If that which came through Rome can be accepted, so can that which came through Greece also. *Kurie eleison* has a profundity accepted by the Lima Liturgy.

Among the chapters that are newly added, The Commemoration of St. Francis Xavier (Dec. 3) is devout. (II. i, pp. 337-343). To quote one prayer,

"Christ our God, in whose sight the death of your saints is precious and in whose eyes the memory of your friends is honoured, you willed that the noble athlete and valient labourer and obedient servant of your majesty, Francis Xavier, should depart today from this world to the world of joy. He bowed his neck from the time of his youth and took your gentle yoke upon him, as he was wounded by the arrow of your love and captured by your friendship. He took up your cross and followed you...and endured hunger and thirst, cold, heat and sickness, and he laboured wonderfully in the spiritual vineyard planted by your disciple....." (341)

I can quote many other such new prayers added, but must ask the reader to read them from the PRAYER WITH THE HARP OF THE SPIRIT.

I am not quite convinced by the arguments of Fr. Francis Acharya in favour of his changing the *Proemion* and *Sedra* to the title 'Eucharistic Prayer' (2, p. 327). In the Syrian tradition the ordered prayer (*sedra*) is distinct from eucharistic prayer and much is not gained by such an innovation. As a whole, the new prayers added are quite good. Such new prayers can come only from a Community of prayer which has been spending more than the quarter of a century with the prayer discipline and long hours of prayer as in the Kurisumala Ashram. All ancient churches will ever be grateful to them.

CORRIGENDA

As a foreign publisher once wrote, Indian proof-reading is notoriously poor. All the corrections are not in the Corrigenda added at the end of both the volumes, yet the indicated corrections in Vol. II are around fifty and there in Vol. III, eight. The corrections not indicated include Proper for Prayer in III. ii p. xv and I Kings 1:1-13 instead of 21:1-13 on p. 394. The quotation on p. xxx (note 25) is not taken from p. 468 as indicated on p. 648 and I have failed in locating the correct page.

From another angle, in two volumes with around 1500 pages, these misprints and mistakes are tolerable. Perfection must of course be the aim let us hope that in the next edition there should be no need of any Corrigenda.

Where to order?

Both these volumes printed in the C. M. S. Press, Kottayam can be ordered directly from Kurisumala Ashram, Vagamon 685 503, Kerala and from Asian Trading Corporation, 150 Brigade Road, Bangalore 560 025.

Conclusion

Prayer with the Harp of the Spirit Vol. II part i, is entitled *Crown of the Year Part I* and contains Seasons of the Annunciation to the Mother of God, Nativity of our Lord, his Baptism and Epiphany. Volume III has the sub-title *The prayer of Asian Churches*. It is *The Crown of the Year Part ii* and includes the prayer of the Church for Sundays and Feasts in the Syrio-Antiochean Traditions. The period covered is The Seven Weeks of the Fast of our Lord and of His life-giving Passion and the Night of His Resurrection.

Those who are better scholars in Syriac have compared the translation with the Syriac original and praised its authenticity. The wisdom of St. Ephrem, whom the Catholic Dictionary of Theology praises as "the greatest theologian of the patristic age and perhaps the only theologian-poet to rank beside Dante Alighieri", is now introduced to the English by a devoted Monk, Francis Acharya, whose humility, spirituality and friendship have always been an inspiration to me.

"Praise to the Lord of lords who chose his chosen ones before the foundation of the world and poured into their hearts the evangelical fire of his heavenly love and enlightened them with his divine knowledge. To him belongs glory, honour and adoration atall times" II, i p. 562)

(Bishop Geevarghese Mar Osthathios)

News and Notes

Church union talks underway between CNI and MCI in India

Talks aimed at uniting the Church of North India and the Methodist Church in India are underway as a result of the first meeting, at CNI headquarters here, of a 14-member Union Negotiations Committee.

Co-presidents of the committee are MCI Bishop Joseph Lance and CNI Bishop Dinesh Gorai. The committee expects to meet at least every six months. It agreed that its starting point should be the 1965 edition of the "Plan for Church Union in North India".

The MCI, formerly part of the US-based United Methodist Church, withdrew from negotiations which led to formation of the CNI in 1970 - from Anglican, British Methodist, Baptist, Brethren, Disciples, and Reformed jurisdictions.

The MCI suggested 13 areas for negotiations, including diocesan restructuring, ministers with limited authority, appointment of ministers, women's work, Methodist episcopal endowment and salaries, constitution, properties, institutions, conscientious objectors, channelling of funds from abroad, unification of the episcopates, recognition of ordained ministries, and MCI-CNI intercommunion. The last three were suggested as the "first step to growing together in unity".

Greek Orthodox Hold World Hunger Meeting

The [Eastern Orthodox] Church of Greece (CG) convened a five-day conference here (9-13 October) to examine ways to coordinate inter-church efforts to alleviate famine in Africa. Archbishop Seraphim, CG primate, called for a "universal emergency mobilisation in which the churches can lead and rally the world to a crusade of saving the hungry". Eastern Orthodox Metropolitan Damaskinos of Switzerland said hunger is "an identity crisis for Christianity. It crushes the sacredness and the personality of human beings."

Among other things, the meeting endorsed Seraphim's proposal to convene a conference of world church leaders on the hunger issue.

Current global ecumenical efforts to fight hunger in Africa include the churches' Drought Appeal for Africa. That coalition includes the Geneva-based World Council of Churches, to which the Church of Greece belongs.

India tells five RC missionaries to leave

India has told five Roman Catholic missionaries in the diocese of Ambikapur to leave the country. They were the last overseas missionaries in the diocese. Bhopal Archbishop Eugene D'Souza said relations between Christians and the numerically-dominant Hindus in Madhya Pradesh state "sour" after an official commission criticized missionaries' work. The archbishop said Hindu fears that Christianity would one day "wipe out" their religion by conversion of Hindus is "without foundation". He also said the church would curb conversion activities which violate "law and order".

"Purpose of Interfaith Dialogue in India"

[Samartha, a presbyter of the [United] Church of South India, is a consultant to the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, and a visiting professor at United Theological College, both at Bangalore (India). This item is excerpted from his presentation to a CSI consultation in Bangalore, 1-4 October.]

... The purpose of dialogue in India is threefold: (i) to remove ignorance and misconceptions of each other's beliefs and practices and to promote better understanding between partners of different faiths; (ii) to co-operate for common purposes in society particularly where human rights, social and economic justice, and peace in the community are concerned; and (iii) to bring to bear the deeper resources of religions on basic problems of human existence that arise because of human finiteness. ... This has practical implications for a possible programme of dialogue for the churches in India.

When we take into account the minority status of the Christian community on the one hand and the tremendous difficulties in the way of closer relationships between Christians and neighbours of other faiths, one should conclude that dialogue in a highly-organized and elaborate way would be difficult and perhaps unwise.

Religious communities that have grown in isolation from each other for several centuries cannot be brought together too quickly. Suspicions have to be overcome. Trust and confidence have to be built up. A vocabulary of communication has to grow. If, as some Christians believe, dialogue is to be used as a subtle means for Christian propaganda and Conversion, dialogue will die before it can be born. Small beginnings might be more helpful for the church to become aware both of the difficulties and the possibilities of dialogue. Dialogue is not a mass movement. Under the present circumstances it has to be dialogue of the few on behalf of the many.

Already at different points there are individuals or groups connected with institutions or projects where Christians and neighbours of other faiths are working together. Perhaps the church should give them greater recognition as "listening posts" and focus theological reflection on their experience, and provide opportunities in diocesan councils or synods or other gatherings to discuss their implications for ... the church in India today.

In selected congregations in large cities where leadership and resources are available, inter-religious groups could be formed to discuss both practical matters in society and deeper issues of faith. The question here should be not which among the many religions in our country is true, but what can religions contribute to the well-being of the nation and its people as we move into the 21st century.

Moreover, there are profound human issues which people of all faiths have to consider today: the meaning of transcendence in a technological society, the question of peace in a world threatened by nuclear war, the problem of sin or avidya or dukkha or alienation and the need to overcome the brokenness of humanity and to heal the rift between humanity and nature.

To believe that the Judeo-Christian-Western tradition has the only answer to all human problems in all countries and at all times sounds presumptuous if not incredible, particularly in our country where millions of our neighbours have found meaning and direction for their lives through other revelations and other ways of salvation. Only the ignorant, the proud, and the blind could ignore them.

(Courtesy—EPS)

New Bishops in the Indian Orthodox Church

The following are the names and addresses of the five recently consecrated bishops of the Orthodox Church in India:

1. Mathews Mar Epiphaneios (formerly Fr. K. Mathai) Coadjutor bishop, diocese of Quilon.
Address : Bishop's House,
Cross Junction
Quilon, Kerala.
2. Philipos Mar Eusebius (formerly Fr. Philipos Thomas). Coadjutor bishop, diocese of Thumpamon.
Address : Mar Basil Dayara,
Pathanamthitta,
Kerala
3. Geevarghese Mar Ivanios (formerly Fr. K. G. George). Bishop of the diocese of Kottayam.
Address : Mar Kuriakose Dayara,
Pampady, Kottayam
Kerala.
4. Thomas Mar Athanasius (formerly Fr. K. T. Thomas). Bishop of the diocese of Chengannoor.
Address : Bethel Aramana,
Chengannoor, Kerala
5. Paulose Mar Militeos (formerly Fr. K. I. Paul) Bishop of the diocese of Kunnankulam.
Address : Arthattu St. Mary's Orthodox Syrian Church,
Kunnankulam, Trichur
Kerala.

THE STAR OF THE EAST

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